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DEPT FOR PRM/ECA, EUR/CARC, AND MOSCOW FOR REFCOORD LISA KIERANS

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY TBILISI'S 2009 TAFT FUND FOR REFUGEES PROPOSAL

REF: 08 SECSTATE 14280

¶1. Summary: Post is pleased to propose a project for the FY09 Taft Fund for Refugees in support of the registration of Georgia's Roma population, focusing initially on the majority of Georgia's Roma population who live in Tbilisi. The project aims to provide the international and local communities with thorough information about Georgia's Roma community. The project is also designed to improve the everyday life of Roma, by creating the necessary conditions for their better integration and development into Georgian society. The project organizers plan to interview and assist Roma to procure registration documents which will accord them access to medical and education benefits. The project will be implemented by a Georgian NGO - "The Human Rights Center" - and the estimated cost of the project is 19,410 USD. Preliminary discussions with the Civil Registry Agency under the Ministry of Justice, indicates they are open to and supportive of the project. End Summary.  
(HRIDC) Project Description and Background

¶2. The HRIDC, formerly the Human Rights Information and Documentation Center, is a Georgia-based NGO dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights. The purpose of HRIDC is to increase respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Georgia, as well as contribute to the democratic development of the country. The HRIDC maintains that the Roma are marginalized in Georgia due to lack of access to social, educational and medical institutions. The main reason for this is that many are not officially registered, lacking both IDs and other documents. The number of Roma in Georgia is small, but little information is actually known about them, making it even more difficult to help.

¶3. Within the project, the first stage will be to conduct a survey of the situation of Roma people in Georgia, by first focusing on Tbilisi, and then other regions based on the numbers residing there.

Based on the surveys, HRIDC will prepare a report on the current status of Roma as well as recommendations to the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Healthcare and Social welfare as to how best to assist the Roma. HRIDC will interface with the Civil Registry Office to assist Roma in getting needed legal documents, and applying for allowances and benefits that otherwise they may not be aware of. Lastly, it is hoped that this report will be a springboard for creating educational opportunities for Roma children.

TEFFT